

Message Text

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ACTION L-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 JUSE-00 EB-07 FBIE-00 SY-04

SCCT-01 USSS-00 AID-05 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 /045 W

----- 051523

O R 061003Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0542

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPRS, PFOR, ETRD, TH, IN, HK

SUBJ: CIVAIR: SUSPECTED SABOTAGE

REF: A. STATE 26395 (NOTAL)

B. BANGKOK 2097

C. STATE 26884

1. ASIDE FROM DANG'S SIGNED CONFESSION, WITNESSED BY THAI POLICE OFFICERS AND INDIAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL, EVIDENCE LINKING HIM TO AIRCRAFT EXPLOSION AND FIRE IS LARGELY CIRCUMSTANTIAL: WHISKY BOTTLE CONTAINING BENZINE TRACES FOUND IN AIRCRAFT TOILET BEARS HONG KONG LABEL; PAPER SACK FOUND IN DANG'S SEAT HAS HONG KONG AIRPORT SECURITY STICKER ON IT AND DANG SAYS CLERK PUT THE TWO CANISTERS OF BUTANE LIGHTER FUEL IN THE SACK WHEN DANG PURCHASED THE FUEL IN HONG KONG. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THERE ARE NO RPT NO EYE WITNESSES TO FACT THAT DANG POURED OUT AND IGNITED BENZINE AND BUTANE FUEL WHILE IN AIRCRAFT TOILET.

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2. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OF CABLES BETWEEN PANAM

BANGKOK AND PANAM HONG KONG TIES DANG TO BUTANE CANISTERS,
AT LEAST CIRCUMSTANTIALY:

A. PANAM BANGKOK CABLE TO HONG KONG:

"NEED URGENT ASSISTANCE REF PA001/02 FEB A/C 740. PLS
CONTACT LARRY ABEL MGR SECURAIR LTD. WE HOLD SECURAIR LTD
RECEIPT NO 1995 TAPED TO BROWN WRAPPING PAPER. RECEIPT
SHOWS FLT NBR PA001 DATG 2/2/75 SEAT NO 35D TIME 2232.
SEEMS THIS PKG DELIVERED TO SECURARI. TWHO DELIVERED PKG
TO PSGR DANG/G? NEED TO KNOW CONTENTS AND ALSO WHERE
PURCHASED. RUSH REPLY."

(COMMENT: PLEASE NOTE THAT CABLE DOES NOT IDENTIFY CONTENTS.)

B. PANAM HONG KONG TELEGRAM TO BANGKOK:

"VARIFIED WITH ABEL/1 THAT SUBJECT RECEIPT NO 1995 OF
BROWN PAPER BAG CONTAINING 2 BTLS BUTANE FUEL FOR
LIGHTERS EVENTUALLY CLAIMED BY PSGR DURING BOARDING
FROM OUR MARKOFF AGENT. AGENT RELEASED PACKAGE
BASED ON CONTENTS BEING LIGHTER FLUID, UNAWARE DANGER
POTENTIAL AND PASSENGER'S INTENTION. ADVISE FURTHER
INFO REQUIRED."

3. WE HAVE SUGGESTED TO PANAM'S LAYTON THAT PANAM SECURITY
OFFICER (CALVIN YUEN) BE AUTHORIZED TO CARRY PHYSICAL
EVIDENCE TO NEW YORK FOR PRESENTATION TO U.S. AUTHORITIES,
AND LAYTON AGREED TO QUERY NEW YORK. SUGGEST DEPT URGE
PANAM NEW YORK TO APPROVE LAYTON'S REQUEST. IF TRIP
IS APPROVED, YUEN WILL CARRY SETS OF DANG'S FINGERPRINTS,
BUTANE CANISTERS AND WHISKY BOTTLE WHICH, ALTHOUGH MUCH
HANDLED, MIGHT STILL BEAR DANG'S LATENT PRINTS, AND OTHER
ODDMENTS FOR LABORATORY EXAMINATION. YUEN COULD DEPART
FOR NEW YORK FEB 7 OR 8.

4. IN REGARD VENUE, DEBRIEFING OF AIRCRAFT COMMANDER
FOLLOWING INITIAL EMBASSY REPORT OF INCIDENT ESTABLISHED
THAT AIRCRAFT WAS IN BURMESE AIRSPACE FIVE MINUTES WEST OF
RANGOON AT TIME EXPLOSION NOTED.
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5. WE HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM INDIAN CONSULAR OFFICIAL,
WHO IS MAKING FULL REPORT TO GOI, THAT INDIAN EMBASSY WILL
NOT TAKE ANY STEPS TO SECURE DANG'S RELEASE WITHOUT PRIOR
CONSULTATION WITH US. MEANTIME, THAI DIRECTOR OF IMMI-
GRATION TOLD US THIS MORNING HE IS HOLDING DANG ON CHARGE
OF ENTERING THAILAND ILLEGALLY, PENDING FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

6. WE ARE POUCHING COPY OF DANG'S PASSPORT. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: HEIGHT, 1 M. 74 CM.; WEIGHT 140 POUNDS; HAIR, BLACK, EYES, BLACK; SCAR ON LEFT SIDE OF FACE.

7. COMMENT: IF JURIDICIAL PROBLEMS PROVE INSURMOUNTABLE, WE SUGGEST THAT DEPT AND EMBASSY NEW DELHI URGE GOVT OF INDIA TO AT LEAST TAKE CUSTODY OF DANG FOR ONWARD TRAVEL TO NEW DELHI AND THAT HIS PASSPORT BE PERMANENTLY REVOKED. DANG STRIKES US NOT AS "MAD BOMBER" OR TERRORIST, BUT RATHER AS SHALLOW AND BUMBLING LITTLE MAN, NOW MORE THAN EVEN OVERWHELMED BY LIFE'S EVENTS, WHO CARRIED OUT DESPERATE ACT FROM SENSE OF FUTILITY RATHER THAN FROM MALICE. WE ARE PERSUADED THAT DANG, WHO IS THOROUGHLY COWED AND DOCILE BUT DISPLAYS NO SIGNS OF IRRATIONALITY, DECIDED TO TAKE HIS OWN LIFE, ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF 80 OTHERS, AS MEANS TO SALVAGE SOMETHING FOR HIS SURVIVORS FINANCIALLY. FORTUNATELY DANG FAILED, AS INTERVIEWS HERE SUGGEST HE HAS DONE IN MUCH ELSE IN LIFE. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, SEEMS TO US THAT IF NO GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO PROSECUTE DANG, THE INTERESTS OF AIR SAFETY, IF NOT BLIND JUSTICE, SHOULD AT LEAST BE SERVED BY PERMANENT WITHDRAWAL OF PASSPORT IN ORDER DEBAR DANG FROM FUTURE ACCESS TO AIRCRAFT MOVING IN INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS.
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TAGS: CPRS, PFOR, ETRD, TH, IN, HK, PANAM, (GOBIND RAM DANG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
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